selected because of their proximity to the District Regulating Stations (DRS) of IGL, as also because a majority of the registrations were from these three pockets.

Additional registrations were also received from pockets B-11, C-3 & C-8, and the total number of registration in Vasant Kunj area increased to 945. However, till date IGL have been able to provide PNG connections to only 379 consumers.

The progress of work for providing PNG connections was severely affected owing to inadequate cooperation from the Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs) of these pockets and interference from the local authorities inspite of IGL's paying them the land restoration charges for laying gas pipelines.

IGL plan to refund the deposit (initial registration money @ Rs. 500/-per house) with admissible interest since cooperation from the RWAs is not forthcoming.

Alternative for LPG

2999. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country is facing shortage of LPG at present;

(b) if so, the annual requirement and availability of LPG at present;

(c) whether there is any proposal to substitute any other fuel for LPG;

(d) if so, the details in this regard and how the alternative. fuel is proposed to be procured; and

(e) whether the same would be supplied to the consumers at the same price as that approved for LPG for the domestic consumers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) LPG requirements are met by a combination of domestic production and imports. A temporary shortage of LPG emerged in September 2005 on account of various factors. PSU production in the period April—September, 2005 was 303 (Thousand Metric Tonne) TMT less than planned; Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL)

production was 190 TMT less than planned. In consequence, physical inventories with oil marketing companies (OMCs) declined from 333 TMT at the beginning of April, 2005 to 190 TMT at the beginning of October, 2005. Then, with effect from 4th October, 2005, RIL, the single largest domestic supplier of LPG, shut down their Fluidized Catalytic Cracker (FCC) unit at Jamnagar for maintenance work. Moreover, at just about the same time, as RIL confirmed its shutdown effective October, 2005, domestic production prospects were seriously impacted by the fire in Mumbai High North and global LPG supplies became tight, largely on account of the impact of Hurricane Katrina on US refineries. All these factors put together upset the plans made by OMCs to effect imports in time to offset the anticipated shortage in supplies.

Through a combination of inventory management and imports, directly handled by a composite task force of the OMCs under the close supervision of the Government, efforts have been made to overcome the physical shortages of supply. In addition to the arrangements made earlier by OMCs to import 642 TMT of LPG during the period October-December 2005, arrangements have been made to import an additional quantity of 237.9 TMT during this period. The overall physical shortage in the country at present has been reduced to only about 1.5% of the average monthly consumption of LPG. However, the backlog at the micro-level may vary from market to market on account of operational reasons.

With the restoration of production of LPG in RIL's refinery from 1st December 2005, the supply situation is expected to substantively improve and normalize in the coming few weeks.

The total sales of LPG in the country during the year 2004-05 were 9967 TMT, where as the indigenous production was 7737 TMT

(c) to (e) About 96% of LPG is used as domestic LPG for cooking purposes in the country. While there is no proposal to substitute LPG with some other fuel, with the increase in availability of natural gas and the necessary pipeline distribution network in future, supplies of piped natural gas may substitute LPG supplies in some areas gradually. At present, piped natural gas is being supplied to some areas of Delhi and Mumbai and is also subsidized.